

Chapter 1

General Export Counseling and Assistance

International Trade Administration (ITA)/U.S. Department of Commerce

The International Trade Administration is dedicated to opening markets for U.S. products and services and providing assistance and information to exporters. ITA units include: (1) 108 domestic Export Assistance Centers and 160 overseas offices in the U.S. Commercial Service network; (2) industry experts, market and economic analysts in Trade Development; (3) trade compliance and market access experts in Market Access and Compliance; and (4) import policy and trade compliance analysts in the Import Administration, which enforces laws and agreements that provide remedies to domestic industries injured by unfair import competition. These ITA units perform analyses, promote products, and offer services for the U.S. exporting community, including export promotion, counseling, and information programs listed elsewhere in this booklet.

Contact: 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723); home page: www.export.gov.

Trade Information Center (TIC)/ITA/U.S. Department of Commerce

The Trade Information Center is the first stop for companies seeking export assistance from the federal government. TIC trade specialists:

- ◆ Advise U.S. firms on all government export programs;
- ◆ Guide businesses through the export process;
- ◆ Provide country and regional business counseling on standards and trade regulations, distribution channels, opportunities and best prospects for U.S. companies, tariffs and border taxes, customs procedures, and common commercial difficulties;
- ◆ Direct businesses to market research and trade leads;
- ◆ Provide information on overseas and domestic trade events and activities.

TIC trade specialists also direct businesses to state and local trade organizations that provide additional assistance. Country information is available on Western Europe, Asia, the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and the Near East.

The Trade Information Center's Web site provides a variety of information, including answers to the most frequently asked questions on exporting, the *National Export Directory* of international trade contacts for each state, a directory of foreign trade offices in the United States, an Internet guide to export trade leads, the latest edition of the *Export Programs Guide*, and more. Extensive regional and country market and regulatory information is also available, including assistance with the NAFTA Certificate of Origin and other free-trade agreement processes.

Contact: TIC staff, 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723); fax (202) 482-4473; e-mail: tic@ita.doc.gov; home page: www.export.gov/tic.





U.S. Commercial Service (USCS)/ITA/U.S. Department of Commerce

The mission of the USCS is to promote the export of goods and services from the United States, particularly by small and medium-sized businesses, and to protect U.S. commercial interests abroad. The 1,800 trade experts in the USCS work in 108 Export Assistance Centers, conveniently located throughout the country, and in U.S. embassies and consulates in more than 80 countries. Together, this network of trade professionals helps U.S. companies enter markets and increase exports by offering a wide variety of export assistance programs, from basic export counseling to specific trade events.

Contact: For information on the USCS and its programs, call 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723), or consult the USCS home page: www.export.gov/commercialservice.



U.S. Export Assistance Center (USEAC) Network/ITA/U.S. Department of Commerce

The U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have formed a nationwide network of U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs). USEACs are located in more than 100 cities throughout the United States and serve as one-stop shops that provide small and medium-sized businesses with hands-on export marketing and trade finance support. USEACs work closely with federal, state, local, public, and private organizations to provide unparalleled export assistance to American businesses trying to compete in the global marketplace. USEACs are responsible for providing in-depth, value-added counseling to U.S. firms seeking to expand their international activities, as well as to companies that are just beginning to venture into international markets. USEAC trade specialists provide global business solutions by: (1) identifying the best markets for their clients' products; (2) developing effective market-entry strategies based on information generated from commercial offices; (3) facilitating the implementation of these strategies by advising clients on distribution channels, key factors to consider in pricing, and relevant trade shows and missions; and (4) providing assistance in obtaining trade finance available through federal government programs, as well as access to state, local, public, and private sector entities.

Contact: For the address and phone number of the USEAC nearest you, see appendix A, call 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723), or consult the Web site at www.export.gov/commercialservice. You can also visit the Commercial Service's field Web sites at [www.buyusa.gov/\[country\]](http://www.buyusa.gov/[country]).

U.S. Export Assistance Center (USEAC) Initiatives/ITA/U.S. Department of Commerce

The **Rural Export Initiative** provides companies in rural areas with better access to export assistance and global market research by facilitating the availability of international trade services and increasing the number of companies in rural areas engaged in

exporting. The **Global Diversity Initiative** provides minority businesses with the international trade information and industry connections that can make their products or services successful in the global marketplace. The **Women in International Trade Initiative** offers the expertise, network, and experience of the Commercial Service to meet the needs of women in international trade.

Contact: For more information, contact Selina Marquez, (202) 482-4799; e-mail: selina.marquez@mail.doc.gov; or view the home page: www.export.gov/commercialservice.

USA Trade Center/U.S. Department of Commerce

The USA Trade Center brings together export-assistance components of the U.S. Department of Commerce to serve as a single source for trade information, research support, counseling, and industry consultation. The Commerce Department's clients can obtain comprehensive export help and regulatory advice on all U.S. government programs, information on exporting to all countries, and access to a trade reference library and business services at one location in the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C.

Contact: 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723); e-mail: tic@ita.doc.gov; home page: www.export.gov/tic.

Small Business Program/Office of Export Assistance and Business Outreach (OEABO)/ITA/Department of Commerce

Focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including women- and minority-owned businesses, the Small Business Program advocates for the small business perspective in trade policy formulation and in multilateral fora, such as the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. It also assists SME exporters, through outreach programs, to understand the benefits of trade and how trade policy affects their commercial success.

Contact: For more information on the Small Business Program, contact (202) 482-4792; e-mail: small_business@ita.doc.gov; or view the home page: www.export.gov.

District Export Councils (DECs)/ITA/U.S. Department of Commerce

DECs are organizations of leaders from local business communities whose knowledge of international business provides a source of professional advice for local firms. Closely affiliated with the U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs), the 58 DECs nationwide combine the energies of more than 1,500 volunteers to supply expertise to small and medium-sized businesses in their local communities that are interested in exporting. For example, DECs organize seminars that make trade finance understandable and accessible to small exporters, host international buyer delegations, design export resource guides, and create export assistance partnerships to strengthen the support given to local businesses.

Contact: For more information on DECs, contact your local USEAC. For the address and phone number of the USEAC nearest you, see Appendix A, call 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723), or visit www.export.gov/tic.





Office of International Trade (OIT)/Small Business Administration (SBA)

The Office of International Trade works with other federal agencies and public and private sector organizations to encourage small businesses to expand their export activities, as well as to assist small businesses seeking to export. The OIT directs and coordinates SBA export finance and export development assistance. OIT outreach efforts include regional initiatives with Mexico, Nigeria, Chile, and Egypt. In addition, the OIT develops how-to and market-specific publications for exporters. The OIT oversees SBA loan guarantee programs for small business exporters, including the Export Working Capital Program, which is available through U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs) and SBA field offices across the country. The office also spearheads a program, through the USEAC network, called **E-TAP (Export Trade Assistance Partnership)**. It focuses on small groups of export-ready companies, providing them assistance in developing export markets, acquiring orders or contracts, gaining access to export financing, and preparing for trade missions or overseas shows.

Contact: Office of International Trade, (202) 205-6720; fax (202) 205-7272; home page: www.sba.gov/oit.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)/Small Business Administration (SBA)

Small Business Development Centers, located throughout the United States, provide a range of export assistance—particularly to small, new-to-export companies—that includes counseling, training, and managerial support. Their counseling services are free to the small business exporter, but they generally charge fees for export training seminars and other SBDC-sponsored export events. Many SBDCs are involved in the E-TAP (Export Trade Assistance Partnership) program.

Contact: Jorge F. Cardona, Office of Small Business Development Centers, (202) 205-7303; fax (202) 205-7727; home page: www.sba.gov/sbdc. For the location of the SBDC nearest you, call 1-800-USA-TRAD(E) (1-800-872-8723).

Export Legal Assistance Network (ELAN)/Small Business Administration (SBA)

The ELAN is a nationwide group of attorneys in private practice, and experienced in international trade, who provide free initial consultations to new-to-export businesses on export-related matters. The ELAN service is available through SBA district offices, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) offices, and Small Business Development Centers.

Contact: For the address and phone number of the SBA office nearest you, call 1-800-U-ASK-SBA; or contact Judd Kessler, ELAN national coordinator, (202) 778-3080; fax (202) 778-3063; e-mail: jkessler@porterwright.com. For a full list of ELAN coordinators across the United States, view the home page: www.fita.org/elan.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)/Small Business Administration (SBA)

SCORE is an organization of 10,500 retired and active business executives who volunteer their time to provide free business counseling and training seminars.

Specialists, many of whom have international trade experience, assist small firms in evaluating export potential and in strengthening domestic operations by identifying financial, managerial, or technical problems.

Contact: National SCORE office, 1-800-634-0245; fax (202) 205-7636; home page: www.score.org.

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)/U.S. Department of Commerce

MBDA promotes the establishment and growth of minority-owned business enterprises in the United States and is the only federal agency that specifically assists minority businesses of all sizes. The MBDA provides management and technical assistance to eligible firms to prepare them for success in both domestic and international markets. The MBDA works closely with the International Trade Administration on innovative ways to engage U.S. minority firms in the international business arena. Seminars inform minority firms of the tremendous opportunities available via international trade. The MBDA supports several minority trade missions and matchmaker programs and notifies the minority community about all Department of Commerce trade missions.

Contact: Donald Powers, (202) 482-4671; fax (202) 482-3473; home page: www.mbda.gov.